

## HIS FIRST INTERVIEW

# Connally Tells of Tragedy

DALLAS (AP)—Gov. John Connally, wounded during the assassination of President Kennedy, said Wednesday that after being shot the President "slumped over and said nothing."

"As I turned to the left, I was hit," Connally said. "I knew I was hit badly. I said, 'My God, they are going to kill us all!'"

"Then there was a third shot and the President was hit again. Mrs. Kennedy said 'Oh, my God. They killed my husband. Jack . . . Jack.'"

"In the space of a few seconds, great joy and anticipation was turned to great tragedy."

Connally, in an interview from his hospital bed—the first since he was shot while riding with Kennedy last Friday—said he has had many thoughts since the tragedy and one of the most important was why Kenne-



**CONNALLY** Texas governor tells of assassination.

UPI Telephoto

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**RECOVERING** Texas Gov. John B. Connally is comforted by wife in a Dallas hospital. He was wounded in the same shooting that killed President Kennedy. UPI Telephoto

## CONNALLY TELLS OF ASSASSINATION

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"I think the assassin was after him only."

"The man did what he intended to do—he shot both of us," the governor added.

Connally and the President were riding with their wives in the lead automobile of a motorcade through downtown Dallas when the assassin fired three shots at them from a building along the route. Two struck Kennedy.

Connally said that perhaps the President, through his death, was asked to do something that is hard to do in life, and that is:

"To shock and stun a nation and its people and the world to what is happening to us through this cancerous growth of extremism."

"This is the only answer I can give you on why he is gone and I am not," he added.

He said the world should avoid the type of extremism that breeds hatred.

### Seed of Destruction

"The genesis of our self-destruction—if we are going to be destroyed—comes from this extremism," he added.

Connally wept and dried his eyes with a towel during a pause in the interview, the first portion of which lasted five minutes.

The governor said he was not told that the President was dead until Saturday, the day after the assassination.

"But it was no news," he said. "I was almost sure he would be after those two shots."

"My first conscious thoughts were, 'My God, what a horrible tragedy in a space of a few minutes.' It makes you ponder and wonder if you are making the contribution you should make to society because you never know when a thing like this can happen."

### Suggests Monument

Connally said a monument should be built to President Kennedy, "but I hope that the people build not in the sense of absolving themselves. The monument should be through patience, tolerance, knowledge, human understanding and dignity."

The governor said he had been very close to the new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, serving with him in the Navy during World War II.

"I thought how ironic it was that the man who defeated him (for the 1960 Democratic Presidential nomination) named me secretary of the Navy and on the day of the tragedy Johnson became President of the United States."

Asked to give his opinion

of President Johnson, Connally said he was a person "of many complexities."

He said that President Johnson has a great understanding of human nature, is a man of his convictions and is forever working for perfection.

"No man ever assumed office better equipped to carry out the duties of the office of President."

Connally said Mr. Johnson was born of hard times and his days of school were arduous.

"But he walked with many people of many nationalities and he understands the heartbeat of this nation as no other man in this position has," Connally said.

He said that the President had walked among the great and the near-great but that he still had the rough exterior of the rural area from which he came.

### Firm, Determined

"He is very firm and determined. I know of no man in my lifetime I would rather have dealing my hand," Connally said.

A tear came to Connally's eye when he related the part about Mrs. Kennedy saying "They killed my husband Jack... Jack."

Connally was completely in control of himself and was pulling himself up and down on the bed with a bar which stretches across the top of the bed.

Prior to the actual news conference, two still photographers and one silent movie cameraman were allowed in Connally's room.

Connally was lying in his bed which was elevated slightly. His wife, Nellie, stood at his head near the end of the bed.

Connally looked pale and appeared to be in pain several times. He coughed a couple of times. One of his wounds is in the chest.

News men were checked thoroughly and physically searched before being allowed near the room.

They were asked not to reveal the location of the bed in the room or the other security measures that had been taken.